



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit  
Communications & Public Information Office

## MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

TUESDAY, 20 AUGUST 2013

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# Highlights

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## **Business group back Kiir, call on Amum to withdraw petition from court**

*Sudantribune.com Juba, 19/8/2013* – A group of business leaders on Sunday threw their support behind president Salva Kiir's decision to suspend Pagan Amum, the secretary general of South Sudan's governing Sudan People's Movement (SPLM).

The business leaders demanded that any reconciliation between the two must be preceded by Amum apologizing and withdrawing his petition against his suspension in the South Sudan's courts.

"We the leaders from various business groups stand behind the decision taken by the president Salva Kiir Mayardit. We assure him our support on the reduction and reshuffle the cabinet. This is a constitutional mandate of the president. We also provide unwavering support to decision by the president in his capacity as chairman of the SPLM to suspend the secretary general", Lual Bol Kuan, the spokesperson of various South Sudanese business groups said on Sunday.

Kuan accused Amum of insubordination by allegedly acting in a way contrary to the SPLM's existing guiding principles by avoiding using appropriate and structures within the leadership to address his grievances.

"We have been keeping quiet as business groups because we knew our leadership would stand together to support the president, but we have seen that the decisions are being sabotaged. Some have started talking about reconciliation. They say president [Kiir] should be reconciled with Pagan [Amum] and the other groups. This is not right. If they want, Pagan [Amum] must come out publicly to apologise and withdraw the petition against decision of the president from the court if they want reconciliation", Kuan told Sudan Tribune on Sunday.

Meanwhile an official at the national secretariat accused an unidentified group within the government of circulating reports in an attempt to discredit achievement of the governing party and the president, allegedly by spreading lies to assassinate character of the leader.

The official claimed that the government possessed an intelligence report, whose authenticity could not be verified, showing that there were some key government officials were working with foreign governments and international organizations to discredit the SPLM and its leaders.

The report, according to the official, claims that there were senior government officials who have drawn up three plans aimed at removing the president Salva Kiir from power at any cost.

"These groups have drawn up three strategic plans. One plan is try to sabotage decision of the president through the parliament where they will be voting against any decision of the president. The other plan is voting against him at the national [SPLM] convention. The last option is to form all alternative party and if they fail to win the election. [A] coup is also one of their resorts", he explained.

The source claimed the intelligence report contains information similar to statements used in recent months by some senior officials in interviews with foreign and local media.

"I have no doubt in my mind that this report has been widely circulated among certain leaders in the SPLM leadership. The information contained in the report about activities of these officials is worrying, as it has changed the opinions of some leaders about the president. I tell you now there are officials at the secretariat who in the past would accept to defend the chairperson of the SPLM have changed in recent past and today are the worst enemies of the president", he said.

He said he has throughout his life advocated togetherness and collective effort that fights against the abuse of state institutions for the narrow factional activities in the SPLM leadership.

## **Ruse Report**

However, Deng Lual, a member of the Sudan People's Liberation (SPLM), said there are hoax reports circulating around in the name of the security allegedly to create conflict within the leadership.

"We have come to realize that there are groups between the leaders who are taking advantage of the current political situation. These groups are the one writing and producing haughty reports attributed to the security organs. I was one of the members who were assigned to verify authenticity of this intelligence report but we found that it is a report aimed at dividing the leadership. All the contents of the reports are unsubstantiated. It is just a ruse report", he said.

He said the report he saw was full of fabrications and unfounded allegations about the conducts of individual leaders within the SPLM leadership.

"Today, a report I saw has all the hallmarks of rogue elements in the employ of the factionalists within our leadership. The contents of the report that I saw today has nothing substantial. It is all about rumours, hearsay, speculations and allegations which are all nonsense other than complete and total fabrications by, among other things, constructing transcripts of telephone discussions and meetings that never took place with the purpose of smearing and getting removed the secretary general and other officials. This is why the leadership today is in turmoil, divided and totally confused", he explained in an interview with Sudan Tribune on Sunday.

Deng Barach Deng, a native of Jonglei state, questioned the authenticity of the intelligence report, claiming the report was concocted as part of the political conspiracy to discredit and liquidate some leaders in the leadership by spreading false information about their conduct.

"There is too much politics within SPLM and we have consistently maintained that there is a concerted effort by forces within and outside to turn it from being a popular party to a failed organisation. This campaign about the conduct of individual members started in 2008. A campaign to remove comrade Pagan Amum as the secretary general failed during the second national convention. But these forces are still pushing. They want him removed", he said. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Jonglei communities seeks government intervention on cattle raid attacks**

*Gurtong.net Bor, 19/8/2013* – Jonglei State communities have made an appeal to the state government and inter-agency organizations to intervene and assist the affected villages following recent cattle raids which resulted into the death of nine people in Alelei cattle camp.

Kuol Bol Ayom, Member of Parliament representing Jalle, a section within Bor County has said all the communities of greater Bor are living in fear and anxiety due to frequent attacks launched by suspected Murle youth being supported by militia faction of renegade David Yau Yau.

The MP said in his statement that they usually receive daily reports concerning the insecurity and activities of cattle raiders in the county.

He said that recent attack was retaliation against Lou-Nuer communities but they couldn't manage to make it that why they diverted themselves to the Dinka community.

"Such attacks by Murle joint forces of Yau Yau and youth were meant for retaliation against Lou-Nuer communities but unfortunately, they couldn't make any break through," said Kuol Bol.

He said that they later changed direction and advanced towards Dinka Bor communities whose arms were seized by the national disarmament forces last year.

He said that all Murle youth refused to surrender their weapons to the government of South Sudan during the disarmament process last year, adding that they decided to join Yau Yau rebellion to avoid handing in their rifles.

As a result of the last operation against renegade Yau Yau militia group by the Lou-Nuer faction on Murle families, they have been evacuated to the centres in Pibor County and were also given food assistance and proper protection from the government.

"They do receive food and other basic services from United Nations (UN) and other related agencies. They are also accorded protection by the government forces. This has become an advantage for Murle youth to carry out unaccountable cattle rustling on the other communities with impunity," he said.

He appealed to the government security forces at the state level to deployed more forces in the areas affected to protect civilians lives, adding that community policing must conduct a joint reconnaissance with the government army forces as well.

Bol also said that UNMISS should quickly respond to the areas affected families without favouring any community.

The commissioner of Twic East County in Jonglei state on Friday accused South Sudan's army and humanitarian agencies of not doing enough to protect and provide for nearly 15,000 people who were displaced in a recent cattle raid. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Humanitarian Coordinator calls for solidarity**

*Catholic Radio Network, 20/8/2013* – Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan called on aid workers and the government to work in the spirit of “solidarity”.

Toby Lanzer in statement marking World Humanitarian Day on Monday committed to continue working together with people of South Sudan.

He said “our goal is to reach three million people in need with lifesaving assistance in South Sudan by the end of the year”.

Mr Lanzer explained that South Sudanese make up the vast majority of people working in challenging conditions and at times risk their lives to deliver assistance in the most remote corners of the country.

“As Humanitarian Coordinator the spirit and courage of the aid workers in the deep field is an inspiration to me”, he said.

Mr Lanzer added that “World Humanitarian Day is an opportunity for all to re-commit to the values that underpin humanitarianism”. He paid tribute to colleagues who lost their lives while relieving the suffering of others. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Cabinet members advised to join private sector if they fail to secure position**

*Gurtong.net Torit, 19/8/2013* – Should they be affected in the upcoming shakeup, Eastern Equatoria Cabinet members have been advised by the state governor Louis Lobong Lojore to join the private sector as part of supporting growth and development in the state.

Last Friday, the Governor presided over an extraordinary Council of Ministers held at the state Secretariat general for the government, with a sole purpose to briefly familiarize the cabinet members along with Chairpersons of state respective Commissions on the impact of the imminent dissolution of Ministries and Commissions with subsequent reshuffles of both.

Underscoring the need for the leaders to contribute in development if some of them happen to be removed as a national decision will compel the governor to, Hon. Lobong advised them that if happens or if some of them are affected, they must continue to cooperate and understand that what happens is a national decision but not himself the governor or as an individual.

He also appealed to his present cabinet to immediately help engaging themselves with commitment in private commercial activities as a means to sustain development the state while working together to support the going as far as development is concerned in the state.

During the Cabinet extraordinary meeting, the state governor Lobong informed members the upcoming reduction of the Ministerial positions though he exactly did not elaborate further on how he will reduce the said ministries and Commissions and in which date the action will be done.

The state spokesperson Felix Otuduha Siro told the press after the meeting that the governor briefed the cabinet on the need to reduce the government by relieving some ministers and commissions' chairpersons.

He advised the state public that the pending reshuffle will be a normal political practice being done nationwide and not only in Eastern Equatoria State. ([Back to Top](#))

## **Unity Governor sacks three Commissioners**

*Sudaribune.com Bentiu, 19/8/2013* – Unity State caretaker Governor, Joseph Nguen Monyтуel, on Monday issued a decree sacking with immediate effect the commissioners of Payinjiar, Rubkotna and Koch counties.

Monyтуel did not give reason for the sackings. But recently President Salva Kiir instructed the ten governors to reduce on the sizes of the state governments in line with austerity measures taken to reduce the effect of a threat by Sudan to shut the oil pipelines that South Sudan uses to export her oil.

In the changes, John Gatluak Doar replaces Simon Chuol Biel in Payinjiar, George Gatloi Koang replaces John Chuol Wang of Koch and Rev. Maluit Hoth replaces William Gatjang Gieng.

The appointed commissioners took their oath on Monday. Governor Monyтуel urged them to work towards promoting unity in the state,

Many people in the state are however critical of the large size of the state government which includes 11 ministers, the deputy governor, 8 advisors and 7 more technical advisors which were created recently by caretaker governor. The governor made the appointment in a series of decrees on a near weekly basis on the state run Bentiu FM 99.

Residents say they do not know what roles the advisors and the technical advisors play. Anonymous sources who spoke to Sudan Tribune said the big government is a “waste” of state resources.

The critics further say resources spent on the big government could be used to improve on basic services such as roads and health centres. ([Back to Top](#))

## **Alcohol ban threatens locals’ livelihoods in Lakes State**

*Theniles.org Kamapala, 19/8/2013* – Leaders in Lakes State have taken controversial steps to stamp out alcohol consumption, leaving local brewers struggling to survive.

Samuel Kedit Chol, an ECS Rumbek Diocese pastor welcomes the move banning alcohol, under the leadership of retired General Matur Chut Dhuol; the State Government in February banned the brewing of local alcohol and consumption of the sorghum-based beverage in local bars.

Many citizens voiced anger at the move, calling it an import from Khartoum and blaming the State Government for indirectly imposing Sharia laws.

“This is typical Arab and Sharia law, which we fought against for more than two decades.” Samuel Mading “This is typical Arab and Sharia law, which we fought against for more than two decades,” said Samuel Mading, a 42-year-old resident of Rumbek town.

The State Governor started tackling alcohol consumption, which he says boosts insecurity in the State, particularly among cattle keepers who become violent after drinking.

However, among those affected by the law were women, especially single mothers and widows, who brew local alcohol, called “Siko” in Arabic or “Mau Chol” in Dinka, to earn enough to live. The move to outlaw it has hit them hard, in some cases making it impossible to buy enough to eat.

Veronica Nyilok, knitting and decorating bed sheets as an alternative for her survival after the ban of alcohol brewing in Lakes State, “Life has become hard now, I cannot finish building my small house and I cannot even afford 20 kilogram of maize flour,” said Veronica Nyilok, a single mother of four children.

“The law came out when I had put ten jerrycans of local brew for fermentation and before I cooked it, the police came and poured it away: I have incurred a great loss.”

She said brewing alcohol from sorghum, yeast, and sugar used to buy her daily bread but she is now destitute. She makes meagre earnings by sewing pictures on bed sheets, but not enough to support her family.

However, religious leaders welcomed the alcohol ban, blaming drinking for moral decay. “We can now have peace of mind because alcohol was causing a lot of damage in our society,” said Samuel Kedit Chol, a pastor of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, Rumbek Diocese.

“Families were breaking up, children and women were beaten by the drunkard men.” He urged women who formerly brewed alcohol to find another source of income.

But it remains unclear whether the ban has reduced the frequency of violent attacks. Early signs suggest no simple legal solution can halt the upsurge in violence. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Police officer climbs telephone tower over lack of pay**

*Emmanuel Radio Torit, 19/8/2013* – Business came to stand still on Friday morning for three hours as a crowd gathered to watch a police officer climbing a telephone tower in a protest to lack of payment.

Solomon Korok was armed with AK-47 and dressed in full police uniform climbed up Gemtel tower to express disappointment on none salary payment for one year, Emmanuel Radio reported.

Friends, security personnel and relatives including Korok’s mother negotiated with him on the phone to climb down from the tower.

Mr Korok told the negotiators that he did not intend to harm anybody but only wanted to show police authority that his money was to be paid.

State Public Administration and Internal Affairs minister Claudio Suleiman Liling said Korok’s issues started when he requested for a leave to study in Khartoum.

He explained that when Korok returned from Khartoum found his name deleted from the payroll and demoted from sergeant to private.

Minister Liling said his office and the police Commission will administratively handle Korok’s concerns. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Presence of automatic rifles fuels conflicts: MP**

*Gurtong.net Bor, 19/8/2013* – The presence of automatic rifles and ammunition's in Pibor County is fueling inter-communal conflicts and a cattle raiding in Jonglei State, an official from the Murle community has said.

“I don’t agree that long time ago, there was no cattle raid. A cattle raiding was there before we were born but it is being extended at the moment simply because fire arms and the ammunitions are in the hands of the wrong people, the civilians or criminals,” said a member of parliament in the state legislative assembly representing Pibor South, Judi Jongole Boyoris.

Speaking to the media, Boyoris said during their times as young men, there were no AK-47 rifles and other automatic guns which are now currently common everywhere in the country.

Boyoris said that one community among the four tribes of Pibor county has been engaged in cattle rustling and child abduction since the Sudanese long civil war which has become the continues issue which currently ranking Jonglei state as a volatile state within South Sudan.

The MP reveals that the presence of the firearms has encouraged all the youth to go for cattle raiding depending on the circulation of ammunitions in their hands.

He disclosed that automatic guns are the elements which support youth and group of subversives activities to destabilize innocent communities because with present of firearms in the state, the criminals cases are increasing.

Other leaders have said that cattle rustling mostly practiced by the youth in South Sudan are believed to have been fuelled by the high bride price demanded by most ethnic communities during marriages in the country. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Minister bans foreigners from boda-boda business**

*Gurtong.net Juba, 19/8/2013* – South Sudan’s Interior Minister Aleu Ayeny Aleu last week banned the involvement of foreigners in motorbike business commonly known as boda-boda and stressed swift action will be taken against any one violating the order.

Aleu who said his move was reached at the backing of the South Sudan Police Act 2009 is aimed at tackling the insecurity threat in the country and particularly Juba city.

He said no any license should now be offered to any foreigner that will like to operate in the bodaboda business sector.

He had tasked the Inspector General of Police and the Director of the Police Traffic to effectively execute the order.

The order had also threatened to deal with any violator accordingly based on the provisions of the South Sudan laws.

The bodaboda business in South Sudan is being operated by both nationals and foreigners. Section of thousands of foreign youth with others being school drop outs are foreigners.

Some of the foreigners alleged to be criminals hide themselves in the cover of being bodaboda men, an environment that helps them execute their criminal acts successfully.

Aleu, a legislator at the time of his appointment as the Interior Minister last month had ever pronounced odds of insecurity being contributed by the bodaboda business in the city. He had suggested several measures against to improve the situation.

Following his swearing in as the Minister in the previous, this is one of his outstanding moves geared towards improving the security situation in Juba. ([Back to Top](#))

### **South Sudan joins IGAD’s Rapid Response Fund**

*Catholic Radio Network, 19/8/2013* – South Sudan became the fifth IGAD member state to benefit from the Rapid Response Fund a regional basket fund operated under the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism or CEWARN.

CEWARN Director Richard Barno told CRN that since South Sudan became a member of Rapid Response Fund it accessed only one and half million US dollars.

He explained that the country can now apply for bids to get a maximum funding of 50 million US dollar for conflict prevention and capacity building.

Mr Barno added that a member with more projects can get more fund and benefits.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Ambassador Charles Manyang expressed happiness to see conflicts ravaged states at the launch of the Fund so that if their conflicts are identified they will use the funds.

He hopes that the conflict-affected states will benefit meaningfully from the funds. Peace and Reconciliation Commission Chairperson Chuol Rambang they will provide quick application techniques in order for states to access the funds.

He explained that quick application and response will be the system in arresting conflicts from escalation.

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism is Inter-governmental Authority on Development or IGAD’s specialized unit for conflict prevention and management. ([Back to Top](#))

### **A child rights advocacy group runs out of funds**

*Eye Radio, 19/8/2013* – A child rights advocacy group says it has so little money it cannot do its work on behalf of children.

The South Sudan Parliamentary Lobby Group for Children – which is made up of parliamentary volunteers – lobbies for the rights of children in the National Assembly.

“The lack of funding means that essential services to vulnerable children cannot be met,” chairperson Honorable Mary Nawai told Eye Radio.

“We do not have stationery in our office like papers, pens. We need to carry out a research to identify the root causes of the children being on the streets, but we don’t have funds for that.”

Last week the group organized a high level capacity building workshop on investment in children for MPs and senior government officials. The meeting called for policy reform in the area of children’s rights. ([Back to Top](#))

### **South Sudan religions urged to work in harmony**

*Gurtong.net Torit, 20/8/2013* – South Sudanese Christians have been urged to seek unity, love and harmony with other different religions for successful development to take place in the new nation.

The Parish Priest of the Lady of Assumption, Fr. Joseph Aruma, commented that unity, peace and loves among the Christian population along with other religions in the country remains a critical factor to be considered as South Sudanese irrespective of social or religious, political and economic backgrounds to usher indisputable development.

He asserted that South Sudanese Christians must strive for unity among themselves in all things and as believers we are called into one body, the body of Christ Jesus saying unity is the state of being one or single of minded.

“We should make an effort to dwell in the spirit of unity between believers; there should be no divisions or arguments among us. We should live in mutual harmony out of love for each other in accordance with Christ Jesus,” expressed the Parish Priest of the lady of Assumption.

The Church leaders have noted that as a definitely lesson in love, it takes effort to get a long and be in agreement with other brothers and sisters in Christ.

They believe, “It takes humility, patience and endurance but we are to be eager to guard and keep this harmony and oneness into which we were called. Unity is produced by the spirit of God and it has the power to bind us together in peace. We were called to one hope and as such we have more in common with each other than not, so we should recognize this and strive to live in mutuality in Christ Jesus.”

The newly appointed Catholic Diocese of Torit Apostolic Administrator Monsignor Thomas Oliha who strongly like other fellow colleagues called for unity, peace and love among South Sudanese Christians said, "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," quoting from Romans 15:5-6.

He called on the South Sudanese citizens to unite to facilitate achievement of lasting national healing, peace and reconciliation countrywide.

The State Deputy Governor Jerome Gama Surur lamented violence among South Sudanese communities in the country even though all as the country’s ethnic groups contributed uniformly in solidarity in the just ended liberation struggle.

He condemned seeing the very people who struggled shoulder to shoulder now slaughtering one another as if they have forgotten where God has taken them through.

Different clergy leaders were speaking while addressing thousands of Catholics converging to celebrate the feast of Lady of Assumption, the Blessed Virgin Mary, in an a colourful event held yesterday at the Lady of Assumption Church in Torit of Eastern Equatoria State.

Also among key leader attending the Day was the just newly appointed Vicar General, Fr. Arkangelo Lokoro. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Eastern Equatoria to upgrade three towns into municipalities**

*Sudaribune.com Torit, 19/8/2013* – South Sudan’s Eastern Equatoria state parliament has passed a memo upgrading Torit, Kapoeta and Nimule towns into municipal or town councils.

The memo was re-submitted on Monday for deliberation during sitting number 19 of the fourth session chaired by speaker Emmanuel Ambrose Ocholimoi.

The chairperson of the committee and the minister of cabinet and parliamentary affairs, Clement Laku Chichim, who tabled the motion in July, said it is the time for Eastern Equatoria State to move forward in delivering services and development.

On 24 July the assembly deliberated on the same memo but it was referred back to the committee because it lacked information on the sizes of the proposed areas and their respective economic statuses.

Agricultural products such as those from forestry, animal resources, cultural heritage, minerals resources and various receipts of taxation, license, donations and grants were cited as the sources of the economic viability of the three areas.

On the sizes, the committee proposed Torit as a Municipal Council composed of five blocks, including Hawaimeser, Nyong, Ilangi, Fodofodo and Laballua and shall be administered by a Mayor.

It is proposed that Kapoeta becomes a town council with five blocks including Nagirare, Kotome, Tarawa, Rei and Palakeol and Natingaro, while Nimule is also to become a town council consisting of five blocks including Kololo, Malakia, Sekua, Abila and Reyi.

Under the proposal, both Nimule and Kapoeta town councils would be administered by town clerks.

Despite some MPs suggesting that some of the estimations in the proposed areas were not correct the parliament passed the memo, recommending that the correct figures for the sizes of the towns are to be worked on by technical experts.

However, late last week the Magwi county community of in the Madi corridor protested against the upgrading of Nimule into a municipality, presenting a letter to the state parliament speaker saying they are not ready for Nimule's status to be upgraded to a municipality due to the lack of a wider consultation with its citizens and intellectuals.

The decision to upgrade the three major state towns appears likely to experience major challenges in terms of potential friction over who has jurisdiction over various issues between the county commissioners and the town mayors. ([Back to Top](#))

## **Humanitarian Day in South Sudan**

*Eye Radio, 19/8/2013* – The United Nations in South Sudan will target three million people with food and material assistance in areas affected by conflict and floods or famine over the next year.

On World Humanitarian Day, the UN says that South Sudan is one of receives one of the largest aid assistance operations in the world; over seventeen thousand UN workers are involved in providing food assistance and protection in the ten states.

Toby Lanzer, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan, says that there are still thousands of people in need of aid –particularly in Pibor County of Jonglei state.

“The situation is still very unstable and there are tens of thousands of people who are in need urgent assistance –and we are doing that,” he said. “We are aiming over to reach three million people throughout the country this year in key areas such as; food assistance, health, emergency-education, water and sanitation, mine action and a whole range of different activities.”

The County Commissioner from Twic East in Jonglei state, Dau Akoi Jurkuc said that the UN must act quickly to get food supplies to the people in the state. He said armed raiders recently attacked several villages in his area causing the residents to flee into the swamps and other states.

“They need food, they shelter and they need medicine,” he said in reference to those who have fled. “We have been appealing to the humanitarians that these people need immediate help and also they need protection because of the fear and the panic which is there now at the moment.”

Mr. Lanzer said that aid workers often face tough situations, with high insecurity, working in places where there is no infrastructure.

“There are these couple of hotspots and there are very serious incidents that have taken place where the safety and the security of aid workers has been put in jeopardy, and this causes utmost concern, because if they are not safe, then they cannot carry out their work,” he said.

The government and the public must protect aid workers in South Sudan said Mr. Lanzer.

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon says the Humanitarian Day commemorates and honors aid workers for their sacrifice.

He also said the special day reaffirms the UN’s commitment to the lifesaving work that humanitarians carry out around the world, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances, where others cannot or do not want to go. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Sudan, South Sudan relations improving: foreign minister**

*Gurtong.net Juba, 19/8/2013* – The two long term foes, Sudan and South Sudan, are experiencing improved relations following escalating tension in recent months, South Sudan Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Minister has said.

Dr. Barnaba Marial while briefing the press today said there has been close contacts between the countries that are now strengthening ties.

“There is a direct contact between the two Presidents (Salva Kiir of South Sudan and Omar Al Bashir of Sudan)...and in particular on the issue of the oil deal,” Marial told the press in Juba.

“As I speak now they can call each other and communicate and this improves our relations. Actually we are not surprised that the oil is flowing,” said Marial.

He said Juba and Khartoum is currently engaged in building up strong ties in three levels, pointing out through: Ministerial level, between contact of the two Presidents; Kiir and Bashir and through the African Union.

Sudan and South Sudan since June was locked up into bitter relations following threats by president Bashir to shut down Juba oil flow through his country on grounds that Juba is backing rebels fighting his government, an allegation Juba denied. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Russia agrees to sell attack helicopters to Sudan: report**

*Sudantribune.com Washington, 20/8/2013* – Sudan and Russia sealed two agreements since 2011 for the sale of two dozen Mi-24 attack helicopters and 14 MI-8 transport helicopters, a Russian newspaper reported today.

The first batch of the shipment was delivered in 2012 in accordance with a contract between two countries a year earlier and the second one was scheduled for delivery this year per a second agreement, Vedomosti business daily quoted two aviation sources as saying.

An analyst surveyed by Vedomosti put the value of the contract to be between \$150-\$200 million which includes maintenance and certain upgrades to the helicopters.

But conditions were attached by Russia to the sale including not using it in Sudan’s restive region of Darfur per United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions banning military flights there.

Russia has already informed the UN Sanctions Committee about the pending sale in a letter sent last February, Vedomosti said.

It is not illegal to supply weapons to Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, but states are required to have so-called "end-use" guarantees from the Sudanese government that the arms will not end up in Darfur.

But rights groups assert that Sudan routinely uses weapons sold by Russia, China and Belarus in Darfur.

In a related issue, a source close to Russia’s agency for defense sales known as Rosoboronexport, said that Sudan is also negotiating the purchase of 18 former Indian Su-30K fighters that are stored in an aircraft repair plant in Belarus. ([Back to Top](#))

## **Sudan continues to bomb citizens in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile**

*Catholic Radio Network, 20/8/2013* – Sudanese Government continues with its ground and aerial attacks in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states against citizens.

The second report of the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency or SRRA issued over the weekend said over one million Sudanese citizens are living in fear, without shelter, food and clean water.

It explained that indiscriminate aerial bombardment against civilians, their villages and farms have atrocious effects on Sudanese population lives.

The report said Sudanese forces conducted 284 air strikes between January and June displacing half a million people internally with 200 thousand sought refuges in the neighbouring countries.

The report said the Government continues to block access to humanitarian agencies on the ground after it refused to sign cessation of hostilities.

SRRA Director Philip Neroun said, 'there is a huge humanitarian crisis looming in the two areas that requires immediate attention and response by national and international humanitarian actors to alleviate this appalling situation.' ([Back to Top](#))

## **Darfur peace mediator, rebels hold consultations meeting in Tanzania**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 19/8/2013* – The joint chief mediator for peace in Darfur Mohamed Chambas organizes a consultations meeting Tuesday in Arusha, northern Tanzania, with the hold-out rebel groups in a bid to step up efforts to end the 10-year conflict in western Sudan.

The encounter comes after meetings Chambas who is also the head of the African Union United Nation Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) held with the rebels in Kampala last May, around two year following the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) in July 2011.

The chief mediator told the UN Security Council in a report last July before the renewal of UNAMID mandate , that the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the two Sudan Liberation Movement factions of Abdel Wahid Al-Nur (SLM-AW) and Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM) "welcomed the initiative" to reenergize the peace process and agreed to meet with him after Ramandan.

The report further spoke about "complementary processes of renewed engagement of the non-signatory movements", in reference to the DDPD which the rebels refuse. The three groups and their ally, Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N) reject the existing separate forums for peace in Darfur and Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

JEM spokesperson Gibreel Adam Bilal, told Sudan Tribune that the rebel movements are going to meet with the joint mediator with an "open mind and without any preconditions" to discuss ways to bring a lasting and just peace in Darfur.

"However we are going with the vision of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) calling for a comprehensive peace process to resolve not only Darfur crisis but all the conflicts in the different regions and to re-establish a democratic regime in Sudan", Bilal further emphasised .

He said that they do not seek partial solutions but want to address the root causes of the whole Sudanese crisis, stressing they have a clear vision for a holistic solution that ensures the participation of all the political forces in the political process.

The African Union Peace and Security Council on 19 July rejected the rebels' demand saying that Darfur people "should not wait any longer for a comprehensive resolution of the conflict" and called on the international community to support efforts for peace under the DDPD. It further added that the democratic transition and other constitutional reforms can come, after the end of different conflicts, with the support of AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).

Also the Security Council, eleven days later, backed the African body and called on the Sudanese government and rebel groups to engage talks on the basis of the Doha framework text.

An international diplomat close to the file said that the international community is not yet ready to support calls for a comprehensive solution even if some western countries consider it represents the best option to settle the ongoing conflicts in Sudan.

He pointed out that the stability of the region requires focusing efforts on the settlement of Sudan south Sudan disputes and supporting democratic transition in both countries after the resolution of internal conflicts.

The joint mediator reportedly has declined to include the SPLM-N in Arusha meeting.

The SPLM-N last April demanded to include Darfur rebel groups in a meeting the AUHIP organised between the Sudanese government and the rebel group but the request was also refused.

The meeting is attended by international observers from the African Union, Arab league, European Union, UN Security Council members.

The mediation hopes to bring all the rebel groups to the negotiating table as it was the case in the peace process of 2004-2005 held in Nigeria. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Kenya signs infrastructure, energy deals worth \$5 bln with China**

*Reuters Nairobi, 19/8/2013* – Kenya signed deals worth \$5 billion with China on Monday to construct a railway line and an energy project, deepening ties with the Asian country keen to expand investment in Africa.

The cash would be spent on energy projects, a standard gauge railway linking the port of Mombasa in east Africa's biggest economy to its border town of Malaba, meant to provide faster access from Kenya's port to markets in the region, the presidency's media service said in a statement on Monday.

The rest would be used to improve wildlife protection, in a country where well-armed criminal gangs have killed elephants for tusks and rhinos for their horns that are often shipped mainly to China for use in ornaments and medicines.

It was not specified whether the cash was a loan or grant, or whether this was all new money or part of a previously negotiated but unannounced package.

The deals were agreed in Beijing after talks by Kenya's new President Uhuru Kenyatta and President Xi Jinping. Kenyatta is on a state visit to China scheduled from Sunday to Friday.

During his first visit to Africa in March, Xi pledged to help the continent develop, responding to concerns that China is only interested in shipping out the continent's raw materials.

China is already key player in Kenya, constructing capital-intensive flagship projects, mostly roads.

Kenyatta's visit follows a promise he made during the presidential election campaigns preceding the March 4 vote.

He vowed to work closely with China following comments by United States, Britain and some European officials who said they would limit contacts with Kenyatta should he win owing to his indictment for crimes against humanity at The Hague.

On Monday, Xi said China supports Kenya's quest for industrialization and plans to host a clearing house for the Chinese renminbi currency in Nairobi, as part of Kenya's plans to become an international financial hub.

Kenyatta urged China to invest in Kenya's newly discovered oil sector, power generation, a technology city near the capital city and a new port in Lamu, north of Mombasa.

The \$25.5 billion Lamu project would link landlocked South Sudan and Ethiopia to the Indian Ocean port of Lamu by constructing a major highway, a railway and an oil pipeline. ([Back to Top](#))

## **Fahmy heads to Khartoum**

*Daily News Egypt, Cairo, 19/8/2013* – Minister of Foreign Affairs Nabil Fahmy travels to Sudan and South Sudan to address regional issues

Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Nabil Fahmy travelled to Khartoum on Monday as part of a two-day trip to Sudan and South Sudan.

Fahmy was scheduled to meet president of Sudan Omar Al-Bashir and minister of foreign affairs Ali Ahmed Karti before travelling to South Sudan to meet South Sudanese president Salva Kiir Mayardit and the country's minister of cabinet affairs Deng Alor Kuol.

Fahmy is set to discuss bilateral relations, regional affairs, and the “unacceptable” decision of the African Union, according to Egyptian foreign ministry spokesman Badr Abdelatty.

The African Union suspended Egypt from all activities following the overthrow of former president Mohamed Morsi, a decision strongly criticised by the Egyptian government.

Abdelatty also stated that Fahmy would discuss Nile Basin and water issues with the two countries, saying Egypt was “embarking on a diplomatic track” with Sudan and Ethiopia in order to implement the recommendations presented by an international panel of experts concerning Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam. ([Back to Top](#))

## **Egypt in tumult as court orders Mubarak freed**

*The New York Times Cairo, 19/8/2013* – A court on Monday ordered the release of former President Hosni Mubarak, and for the first time it was conceivable he might go free — a measure of how far the tumult now shaking Egypt has rolled back the sweeping changes and soaring hopes that followed his exit two and a half years ago.

Few legal analysts thought a release was likely, at least in the coming weeks. But under the government installed last month by Gen. Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi, they say, it is no longer a foregone conclusion that prosecutors will continue to find reasons to detain the former autocrat, who was arrested after the uprising against his rule in 2011.

Some analysts said that even the possibility of Mr. Mubarak's release, previously unthinkable, provided another sign of the return of his authoritarian style of government.

Since the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi, the interim government has brought back not only prominent faces of the Mubarak era but signature elements of that autocratic state, including an “emergency law” removing the right to a trial and curbs on police abuse, the appointment of generals as governors across the provinces and moves to outlaw the Muslim Brotherhood again as a terrorist threat.

The Brotherhood's spiritual leader, Mohamed Badie, was arrested early Tuesday. A private television network that supports General Sisi broadcast footage of Mr. Badie in custody.

The police scarcely bothered to offer a credible explanation for the deaths of three dozen Morsi supporters in custody over the weekend. After repeatedly shifting stories, they ultimately said the detainees had suffocated from tear gas during a failed escape attempt. But photographs taken at the morgue on Monday showed that at least two had been badly burned from the shoulders up and that others bore evidence of torture.

Security officers have a new bounce in their step. They are again pulling men from their cars at checkpoints for interrogation because they have beards, or dealing out arbitrary beatings with a sense of impunity — Mubarak-era hallmarks that had receded in recent years. Among civilians, even those outside the Muslim Brotherhood, fear of the police is growing.

Badr Abdelatty, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, denied any resemblance between the new government and Mr. Mubarak's. “The emergency law is just for one month and for one objective: fighting terrorism,” he said, using the term that the new government applies to both civil disobedience and acts of violence by Islamist opponents of the military takeover. “The only way to fight terrorism is to apply the rule of law, and some emergency measures for just one month, to bring back law and order.”

More than 1,000 Brotherhood members and other supporters of Mr. Morsi have died since Wednesday in a police crackdown, and his ouster has set off a wave of retaliatory violence from his supporters, mainly targeting churches around the country and security forces in the relatively lawless northern Sinai. In the latest episode there, militants killed 25 police officers and wounded 3 others on Monday in an attack on their minibuses. Officials said the bodies were face down with bound hands, evidently assassinated.

Egyptian state and private television networks, all pro-government now, broadcast images of the bodies' return to Cairo, sometimes under a heading about Egypt's fight against terrorism. The Muslim Brotherhood, which has denounced those killings, held protests and marches by thousands of its supporters in Cairo and across the country, as it has every day for the six weeks since Mr. Morsi's ouster.

Some analysts said Monday that the new government was arguably more authoritarian than Mr. Mubarak's. "The Mubarak state was actually less repressive than what we are seeing now," said Shadi Hamid, research director for the Brookings Doha Center in Qatar. "In terms of sheer number of people killed, what we are seeing is unprecedented for Egypt."

But where Mr. Mubarak's supporters were diffident or self-serving, Mr. Hamid said, General Sisi "has the fervent backing of millions of ordinary Egyptians, many of whom think the army has not been sufficiently brutal against the Muslim Brotherhood."

"That is what makes this new authoritarian order much more resilient and harder to dislodge," he said.

One human rights advocate said the symbolism of Mr. Mubarak's release might help. "For someone like me, it would be greatly helpful," said Hossam Bahgat, founder of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and one of only a few advocates who have questioned General Sisi's declaration that he was advancing the 2011 revolution by removing the elected president.

"It is better to end the theatrics and have some clarity," Mr. Bahgat argued, if only to convince former revolutionaries of the danger that the authoritarianism of "the Mubarak state" may be re-emerging in a different guise.

Judges have dismissed many charges originally brought against Mr. Mubarak, including directing the killing of protesters. But the previous post-Mubarak governments always made clear that they would keep finding new allegations to keep the former leader behind bars. The council of generals that succeeded Mr. Mubarak was too desperate to placate the public and preserve its own legitimacy to release him, and Mr. Morsi campaigned on promises to keep him locked up.

But the Sisi government has no such insecurity about its power, or hostility to Mr. Mubarak. Some members of political factions that had previously joined rallies for Mr. Mubarak's incarceration, or even execution, said they believed the public did not care so much anymore.

"I don't think people are paying the slightest attention," said Hussein Gohar, a spokesman for the Social Democratic Party. "And if it happens, it will not have anything close to the impact it would have had a year ago," he said of Mr. Mubarak's release, in part "because people have moved on" and in part "because of the paradigm shift to support for the army."

Besides, Mr. Gohar said, he did not think the new military-backed authorities would allow massive protests against Mr. Mubarak, once an Air Force general. "At the end of the day, Mubarak is part of the military," Mr. Gohar said. "He is one of them."

The interim government bears other resemblances to the Mubarak government. General Sisi, the defense minister, was Mr. Mubarak's head of military intelligence. The figurehead president, Adli Mansour, a judge, was appointed to a top court under Mr. Mubarak. The interior minister was a high-ranking official under Mr. Mubarak. The foreign minister is a senior ambassador who served in Washington. The finance minister is an economist who worked closely with Mr. Mubarak's son and designated successor, Gamal, who became a senior figure in the old ruling party. And the justice minister is another judge appointed to a top court under Mr. Mubarak.

But many pointed to crucial differences between now and the Mubarak era.

Mr. Gohar of the Social Democrats said the revolution had inculcated a new demand for participation and accountability that would prevent a return to the old order. “There is still a deep state, of course, but you cannot go back,” he said, adding that continued pro-Morsi protests demonstrated Egyptians’ new assertiveness. “People are not going to be passive anymore and just accept what is handed to them by the government.”

Mr. Bahgat argued that General Sisi’s government might rely on the same people, institutions and tactics that Mr. Mubarak did, but said it was a new authoritarianism, not a restoration. This time, he said, there is a much greater emphasis on “the propaganda machine,” suggesting that attention to public opinion may be the main legacy of the 2011 revolt.

Many analysts say that whatever its inclinations, the government are unlikely to risk even a small public backlash at this volatile moment by releasing Mr. Mubarak. If it does not, his continued incarceration opens the intriguing possibility that he and Mr. Morsi, now detained at an unknown location, might end up in jail together. Mr. Morsi is no stranger to jail: he was there as a political prisoner just before Mr. Mubarak’s ouster. ([Back to Top](#))

### **Sudanese MPs rap government over flood preparations**

*Sudaribune.com Khartoum, 19/8/2013* – Sudanese lawmakers today grilled the interior minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid over the government response to heavy rains and floods that hit large areas of the country this month killing dozens and destroying thousands of homes.

The MPs described the recent floods as “major calamity” describing that government’s efforts to overcome the crisis as poor that failed to even reach 10% preparation threshold.

Some also warned about the possibility of an environmental disaster following the collapse of 52.000 restrooms besides the growing swarms of flies and mosquitoes.

MP Mahdi Akrad accused the government of building 4.000 residential units in the floodplain and below the hills in Al-Fath town and said he is personally a witness to that,. He also urged those affected to come forward and sue the government.

MP, Abbas Al-Khidir, denounced the official’s aerial inspection of the affected population in Marrabiu al-Sharif, saying that the true leader has to come down and slosh the water with the victims.

He was referring to president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir who inspected the area, alongside the governor of Khartoum state, Abdel-Rahman Al-Khidir, on board a helicopter.

But the interior minister defended Bashir saying that he wanted to land but that the area was full of water.

MP Aisha al-Ghabshawi questioned the spending of millions of pounds collected from citizens by localities and pointed that Khartoum has become one of the dirtiest cities, demanding full investigation on claims of stealing relief materials that was destined to flood victims.

She called for applying Islamic Sharia Law and chopping hands of those proven guilty of seizing aid supplies.

The Sudanese official, however, denied that relief supplies were stolen, saying that they were likely sold to traders by the victims.

He also admitted the existence of engineering defects in all Sudanese cities, acknowledging that waste disposal represents a real challenge to the government.

The minister defended the government and its preparations for the rainy season, saying the finance ministry has provided 20 billion pounds (SDG) to address the damage.

The parliament deputy speaker, Hago Gasm Al-Sid, on his end accused the opposition parties of failing to help ward off the effects of the floods, saying that the only thing they did was to demand the international community declare Sudan a disaster area. ([Back to Top](#))

## **Ugandan soldiers shoot dead Kenyan Turkana warrior**

*Sudantribune.com* Kampala, 19/8/2013 – Ugandan soldiers have shot dead one suspected Turkana warrior from Kenya in the semi-arid region of north eastern Uganda, an army spokesperson told Sudan Tribune on Monday.

Denis Omara, the 3rd Division spokesperson of the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) said the Turkana warriors were six in number, four of them armed with rifles while two were unarmed.

"Our soldiers were patrolling the area when they came into contact with the warriors. The warriors fired at our soldiers and our soldiers responded. There was a shootout which lasted for about 10 minutes. One warrior was killed and a rifle number 0702 recovered from him", said the Uganda military spokesperson.

According to the spokesperson, the incident happened in a remote village on Tuesday last week. The Ugandan military conducts regular patrols in the village as it hosts a Chinese gold mining company.

The dead Turkana has been buried in the district of Moroto, the army spokesperson said, but added that the body will be given back to his relatives in Kenya if they claim it.

The army spokesperson further said that a Kenyan military officer based in Uganda's Moroto district to handle issues of cross border relations between communities in Uganda and Kenya had been informed about the incident.

North eastern Uganda is occupied by a nomadic tribe called the Karimojong. For many years they were armed and roamed about freely with firearms but about a decade ago, the Ugandan government launched a disarmament campaign.

Remnants of firearms still remain in the area which locals say is meant to protect them from the equally armed and nomadic Pokot and Turkana who live across the border in Kenya.

The two tribes regularly move their cattle into Uganda during dry spells in search for water and pasture. ([Back to Top](#))

## **The power of weapons proliferation: The case of Jonglei State – causes and effects**

*Borglobe.com*. 19/8/2013 – First and foremost, I need to shed light on how weapons spread into the hand of civilians in South Sudan particularly in Jonglei State. The civil war in Sudan lasted approximately two decades and resulted in high militarization and arms proliferation among civilians. These arms are an unceasing danger to communities as there have not been major comprehensive disarmament initiatives.

The arms problem was further exacerbated by the influx of arms from rebel groups to the communities; these rebel groups include but not limited to that of late General George Athor Deng and David Yau of Eastern Jonglei. The question that hangs in the mind is whether the arms are astutely used or being misused by the civilians in Jonglei State. Apparently, there could be need or no need for civilians to be armed.

Some civilians acquired firearms unlawfully for personal protections where adequate civilian protection services were discovered limited; however, the weaponries are being misused by civilians in cases of child abduction, cattle raiding, murder, inter-communal violence, road block thievery... etc.

Arms proliferation has contributed to insecurity in Jonglei State, including cattle raiding and armed robberies. It is very difficult to say how many weapons are in Jonglei State because the weapons are everywhere in the state including Bor town, the state capital. What is being speculated is that there is a proliferation and illicit trade in small arms across Jonglei State.

The situation is also exacerbated by lack of laws controlling the sale of small arms and light weapons across South Sudan. This and other factors have direly contributed to the proliferation of arms across South Sudan particularly in Jonglei State.

Coupled with many tribal influences, weapons proliferation remains a central cause of increasing conflict here in Jonglei State. The presence of copious armed civilians increased the fatality rates of communal homicide, cattle raid and undermined the effectiveness of security sector reform within the state.

Now that we know who has small arms and light weapons in Jonglei State, what can be done? This question possesses different answers from various actors, though; we should not sit behind and consent to the power of weapons proliferation to rule us forever.

It is high time that we the citizens of Jonglei State have to wake-up to face our contemporary challenges with strong determination to relinquish on some of our uncouth behaviors. But let's look closely on some sanctions as would be the case. Jonglei crises need solutions from within otherwise our turmoil will not stop until we the affected state citizens stand firm and say enough is enough to our obsolete variances. There has to be a new culture of peace and reconciliation, tolerance and respect for diversity as our unity of purpose would mean our fortes.

As a collective endeavor, the central Government has to be supported in the provision of peace in Jonglei State. It is our shared onus as citizens and civil societies in this part of the country to undertake public awareness campaigns on the danger of illegal arms possession, support peace-building campaigns for the realization of community development projects.

Nevertheless, the national legislative assembly needs to enact up-to-date laws regulating weapon circulation in the hands of civilians. We need laws that allow the state government to acquire marking machines and undertake gun registration with local population prior to simultaneous civilian disarmament.

The law should also allow state government, particularly the case of Jonglei state, to perform "cattle branding" where applicable to differentiate various communities' animals. It will help in the process of distinguishing and identifying cattle raided from other communities.

Since it's equally contingent to disarmament and demobilization of former combatants, the central government has to accelerate demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in South Sudan to limit arms circulation amongst the civilians. ([Back to Top](#))

*John Chol Deng Yol is a concerned citizen of Jonglei State residing & working in Bor Town. The author is reachable thru [choldengyol@yahoo.com](mailto:choldengyol@yahoo.com)*

### **The South Sudan foreign policy**

*Sudantribune.com, 19/8/2013* – The South Sudan's foreign policy outlook exhibits confident neutrality. If the cold war period continued, we would be part of the nonaligned block of nations. Under current international conditions, South Sudan leans toward neither of the big power house nations, China or the United States of America in international or regional altercations.

During the current process of nation building, South Sudan may fall short of an ideal foreign policy. It may be that, the new nation will face challengers in improving foreign policy in some areas.

Since our Independence proclamation on July 9, 2011, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has developed and promulgated a commendable foreign policy document. , Our new Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Honorable. Barnaba M. Benjamin, will take us to the promise land of good foreign policy both regionally and globally.

The South Sudan foreign policy is clearly defined in many major themes including: Zero tolerance with neighboring countries including the Republic of Sudan, Being "proudly African" in promoting African unity, solidarity, and cooperation, Nonalignment and balance in our bilateral relations with China and the USA.

Our foreign policy should be a mechanism for achievement of the South Sudan's domestic national goals .The government of South Sudan and its ruling political wing, the SPLM party, takes justified pride in attaining independence for the beloved people of South Sudan. Our

dignity has been designed into the South Sudan's foreign policy; however the South Sudan must maintain itself as a partner in the regional and global politics.

In the global arena, the South Sudan should pursue a foreign policy with an unbiased and an unlocked gate to other countries. Our objective should assure collaboration with any country which may be interested in assisting our economic and social development. Reciprocity principles of mutual benefit as well as no meddling in our sovereignty affairs are mandatory.

Economic and social development is top priority challenges facing our beloved new nation. Our foreign policy must reflect this imperative. Our new nation needs technical aid and economic help from the international and regional community for South Sudan to tackle development issues following independence.

As stipulated in our South Sudan foreign policy, friendliness is our objective. Military confrontation is unnecessary except for cases of aggression or self-defense requirements. There are challenges along the boundary with the Republic of Sudan, however close cooperation with the African Union and other regional bodies will foster economic and political development.

South Sudan wants to persuade neighbors including the Republic of Sudan that peaceful growth founded on mutual benefit and respect is our amicable goal which will flow from zero tolerance. We do need economic collaboration with other countries to foster domestic development.

The future path

After independent two years ago, two weeks ago, our beloved President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, appointed the Honorable Barnaba M. Benjamin as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. He is a competent and experienced diplomat. What are the expectations of the public from him? The people expect him to implement new diplomatic strategy and translate the confidence of the president into action. The high hopes for the future will be evidenced in his moving into worldwide contact and being on the road to implement foreign policy. ([Back to Top](#))

*Ambassador Dhanajak Obongois the Deputy Chief of Mission in the embassy of the Republic of South Sudan in Washington.*

### **South Sudanese girls are a family asset**

*Sudantribune.com, 19/8/2013* – The scale of early marriages in South Sudan is being underestimated by outsiders, but people born in these communities find it even hard to campaign against the practice. In this article I describe a true story that I witnessed earlier this year of a girl who was forced to marry in South Sudan's Jonglei state. However, the names and locations have been changed to protect the identities of those involved.

Amer Marial sat facing in the opposite direction from her father and paternal uncles. She cannot look them direct into the face even during the night as that would amount to indiscipline in Bor culture. Amer was called to discuss an importance issue with her father and uncles after an evening meal.

“What is importance is that I, your father, and your siblings and mother will have something to eat. That is why we called you,” Marial, Amer's father concluded a long speech encompassing how his family has waited for the day a man would come and ask to marry his eldest daughter.

It was the first week of September and there was no moon, the only source of light to this village. The darkness fell quickly meaning that the importance family meeting was held earlier than usual. It was the first time Amer sat before his father to discuss an issue.

When she left Agoon village, Makuach Payam (district) in May after the end of first term's holidays, she spoke with her father while standing. In fact she had started moving to the west on her journey to Bor town when her father called her to say that she should always take care in school and avoid bad girls because she would be spoiled if she was not careful.

She has thought about what this brief advice meant but concluded that her father wanted her to stay away from bad girls – which means, in the village context, girls that go about with men.

Little is known about education for girls in this corner of the world. Only boys from this village have ever remained in schools beyond secondary education. Three boys enrolled to university after the war of South Sudan in 2005.

Whether those boys will come back and show the significance of education to this village is not yet known. Boys from neighboring villages, now big men in Juba, returned after graduating from university a few years ago and got ministerial positions in the recent government reshuffles.

When they visit their village this Christmas cows will be slaughtered, extra beer will be imported and small gatherings will continue until dawn. Their appointments were celebrated by clan members for a whole week. The success of these men means a lot to these villages.

The countdown is already underway and only three months are still solid; October, November and December.

Notably, none of the educated children from the neighboring villages are girls and Amer's father doesn't understand why his daughter is adamant that she wants to remain in school. The family discussion has one objective: To tell Amer to forget about school and marry to the man who has approached her father.

Amer returned home two weeks ago after midyear exams and is due to return to school in seven days. Before coming for this meeting, she thought it was about her request for tuition fees that her father was now taking seriously. She thought about how to respond but before she said a word, her uncle interrupted.

"What your father said is important and you have to accept," her uncle Deng said.

"I am in senior two and I want to complete my studies," Amer spoke for the first time.

"Children of these days!" another uncle exclaimed.

"They don't care about their fathers and siblings," another uncle yelled.

But one man, who had remained silenced during the long discussion, cleared his voice and began to speak.

"The man we are talking about is educated and working in a very big position in the government in Juba. Not in Bor. He knows about education and I think, daughter of my brother, he has seen your determination to continue with your studies and that is why he approached us. We told him about your stubbornness when someone interferes with your studies," said Alier.

Uncle Deng then volunteered and offered an in-depth profile of the man, who he said was called Hon. Thon-Bai and was intelligent and rich.

"As his name reflects, he is a real man. How many people have accumulated sufficient wealth in such a small time like him? He is brave and won't fear entering any office. He is strong and loves his people. We are sure if he marries you, your father and siblings will not be the same again. The education you are talking about has nothing to add to his wealth."

Deng end his speech abruptly in a show of anger toward Amer's unwavering determination to continue with her studies and defiance.

Amer has heard about Thon-Bai as Member of Parliament in Juba but never heard about his immense wealth and education background. She knew about him when he speaking on the girl child day two years ago. The theme for that year was "Let all children go to school".

She knows that she won't win the battle but must try. A frog never gives up even when the head is swallowed by a predator, she might have thought. The frog would stretch it legs in the air and grasp any object in its vicinity. Sometimes, the frog would grasp the bird at the neck and might not be swallowed at once. Amer wanted to be exactly like that frog and so she commences a long battle.

"I want to complete my secondary school education and then I will be ready for marriage," Amer said, her second chance to speak since the discussion began.

She said there are many girls out there who are ready to marry and wondered why a Member of Parliament would come for a school girl, moreover, a village girl. For her point to carry some weight, Amer reminded her father and uncles that in the future, if she is allowed to continue with her education, she may too be Member of Parliament representing women and would be called Honorable.

“After how long? After how long my daughter?” her father Marial interrupted, this time growing impatient.

When Marial married in 1989, he paid fifty cows as dowry and was left with nothing. God blessed their marriage with a baby girl in 1992. Marial used to stay in cattle camp but after giving all his cows for a woman, he had taken on farming since then for survival. His hands are now hardened and his knees developed rough wriggles. These marks on his hands and knees are the signs of holding farming stick and pressing the ground for support as he tilled the land over the last two decades.

His favorite cow was brown in color and he too owned a big bell called “looth.” Brown color is called ‘Amer’ in Bor dialect. His nickname is “Loth aa—mer” – meaning, the bell of the brown cow. That is the name has held onto and reminded him of the good days. With the pending marrying of his daughter, the goods days were returning, Marial thought. Marial’s father was a wealthy man in 1950s who owned many cows including a smooth ox colored black-and-white (a color called Marial in Bor dialect). Children are named after the colors of cows given in dowry in Bor as well as other cattle communities in South Sudan.

Marial’s father married many wives. A son of the second wife, Marial was the second born of three brothers. His elder brother’s daughter married in 2007 and had 100 cows paid as dowry - not including the drinks and cows slaughtered for the celebration. He took his smaller share from his brother. Now, here is a chance to have a bigger portion from his daughter’s marriage if only his plans were not spoiled by education.

“How long will I be looking at other people fetching cows from their daughters and I just go there to eat meat and come back to the farm? For how long should I wait?” Marial said firmly.

It was passed midnight and a decision had to be taken. Marial and his brothers – including sons from other women of his father, asked Amer to come back early tomorrow with a better option. Or else, they know what to do.

Amer had a sleepless night. She had heard about girls beaten to death after they refused to marry men chosen by their parents. Other girls lost their teeth and some young women are still nursing wounds suffered for questioning the choice of her husband. What would befall her? She has to decide her fate before the morning break.

How can an educated man, representing his people in parliament descend to the village and destroy this innocence, poor girl’s future? She thought over and over but without a definite conclusion. She decided to desert the village and run to the people who work in human rights in Bor.

But human rights people don’t know what exactly goes on in the villages and there have never been any reports of human rights activists reversing a families decision to marry off their daughter. If there are any, Amer has never heard of them.

“If I am caught it will be a disaster,” she thought.

There was a tight security provided by village boys around the home where girls sleep. Any decision to escape would not succeed whatsoever.

At 6:30am elders converged in the compound and Amer was called out. She did not know it was already time for the meeting. Asked if she has accepted to marry Hon. Thon-Bai, Amer kept silent for a moment. Angry questions were now pouring on her. She knew exactly what would happen if her answer is ‘no’.

“I want to continue with my studies,” she said.

Series of stocks fell on her and she had to change her statement there and then. She did not want to be beaten helpless.

She said what nobody had expected.

“I agree to what you said.”

His father, Marial stood up and sang his favorite song.

“Ca loth aa-mer kaac weeric.” That is – ‘I ties my bell of the brown cow in the middle of the night.’

Streams of tears were now following from Amer’s eyes. Circular drops of sweat were forming on her forehead as she sits helplessly. She doesn’t understand why these people were happy at her sorrow.

Marial was happy for two reasons. His daughter is not spoiled and will earn him good number of cows and money from Hon. Thon-Bai.

After eating food without milk-butter for twenty years, his daughter, the only asset he has, is now bouncing the sweet memories of the cattle camps. Marial did not want to beg and that is why he invested his energies in the soil till his daughter grew old enough to attract rich man.

Marial’s living standard will now improve. His boys are still young and will not marry soon. He has enough time to enjoy his cows until those boys reach adolescence. Then he will begin worrying again. He would loss the cows to dowries settlement of those boys.

For now, it is time for celebration. Two dozens of beer were ordered and a goat slaughtered for elders to spend the day with the family before a message is sent to Hon. Thon-Bai about the girl’s acceptance for the marriage arrangements to commence. The process will then continue smoothly. (*Back to Top*)

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